

Session K:

Streamlining Position Classification
Processes "On the Job:" Best Practices in
the Federal Government

Room: Terrace East

Day: Tuesday (3rd session)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ACCRETION OF DUTIES PROCEDURES

Desk audits will no longer be required in the Department of Education to support management-requested accretion of duties promotions through the GS-13 level, unless obvious and egregious deficiencies are present (e.g., conflict with previous Office of Personnel Management precedent; grade or series clearly out of context with rest of the organization; etc.). PD Library generic position descriptions will suffice for describing the higher level position to which promotion is requested. Positions not covered in PD Library will continue to be described individually, but should be written to depict the higher level duties and responsibilities warranting the accretion promotion. They should parallel the library in terms of brevity and standardization where at all possible.

This approach places substantial control and responsibility back in the hands of management. There are, however, Departmental and Government-wide requirements that need to be addressed to insure the integrity of merit principles. In lieu of desk audits, an appropriate level management official of the submitting office will transmit the request with a short narrative that **addresses and confirms ALL of the following:**

- o There is no recognized promotion potential beyond the higher grade to which accretion is proposed.
- o The current position is to be reclassified because of additional duties and responsibilities.
- o The "old" position has been absorbed into the "new" position.
- o The employee continues to perform the same basic functions and the new duties represent an enhancement of the "old" position that has occurred over a significant period of time. "Significant period of time" in this context must relate to the nature of the work being performed and approximate the time it would generally take for any qualified individual to become competent at the higher level responsibilities (e.g., perhaps as short as 90 days for lower-level support type positions to a year or more for senior professionals).

By attesting to the above as the basis for non-competitive promotion, management takes on the responsibility for addressing any internal issues such as appeals or grievances by staff who feel that they too should be considered for non-competitive promotion, or should have been competitively considered for promotion to the higher graded position. Human Resources Group staff will be available to advise managers on any aspect of the above criteria. Managers are strongly advised to seek such advise prior to initiation of accretion actions to avoid internal equity problems.

SUPERVISORY POSITION ADDENDUM (File name SUPPOS.ADD)

This one-page checklist should be completed and attached to the position description for employees who spend 25 percent or more of their time supervising other employees. It should be used in conjunction with the **TEAM LEADER POSITION ADDENDUM** (File name TEAMLDR.ADD) to determine if the position is a Supervisor or Team Leader. The need for, number and type of Team Leader and supervisor positions should be based on sound position management considerations including span of control, type of work overseen, FTE and budget impact, customer service needs, and ultimately the impact on meeting strategic planning objectives. Because PD Library descriptions focus on personal work, both checklists cover aspects of work accomplished through supervising or leading others.

The addendum requires identification of a minimum level of activity needed for supervisory designation. It also lists higher-level supervisory responsibilities that may or may not be required of all supervisors.

Submitting officials should ensure that the minimum criteria for supervisory designation are met and checked on the addendum; additional higher level responsibilities should be check as appropriate.

SUPERVISORY POSITION ADDENDUM

This addendum should be completed and attached to the position description for employees who spend **25 percent or more** of their time providing technical and administrative direction to other employees.

Organizational Location: _____

Number of Subordinates: _____
Professional Other

Immediate Supervisor/Title: _____

At a **MINIMUM**, the incumbent is responsible for accomplishing work through supervision of others, and technical competence related to the work supervised including:

- ___ Planning, scheduling, assigning and directing work operations
- ___ Accepting, amending or rejecting completed work
- ___ Appraising performance and recommending performance standards and ratings
- ___ Assuring work meets standards of quality and quantity
- ___ Approving leave
- ___ Effecting minor disciplinary actions

IN ADDITION THEY MAY ALSO (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- ___ Serves as rating official for performance appraisal.
- ___ Advise staff on work and administrative matters.
- ___ Interview/recommend staff for appointment, promotion, or reassignment.
- ___ Hear and resolve routine staff complaints.
- ___ Develop and train staff.
- ___ Find ways to improve work quality and/or production.

Higher levels of responsibility are characterized by **AT LEAST EIGHT** of the following (**CHECK ALL THAT APPLY**):

- Using staff to help direct or oversee work.
- Significant responsibilities dealing with officials in other organizations.
- Assuring performance rating equity among subordinate units.
- Directing a program with significant resources (e.g., \$1M+).
- Making decision on work problems of subordinate supervisors or leaders.
- Evaluating subordinate supervisors or leaders.
- Selecting/approving selection of subordinate non-supervisors.
- Recommending selection of subordinate supervisors or leaders.
- Resolving group grievances and serious complaints.
- Reviewing and approving serious disciplinary actions.
- Deciding on unique, costly staff training.
- Determining sufficiency of contractor-performed work.
- Approving expenses such as within-grades/overtime/travel.
- Recommending awards and bonuses.
- Promote team building and program reengineering.

TEAM LEADER ADDENDUM (File name TEAMLDR.ADD)

This one-page checklist should be completed and attached to the position description for employees who regularly and routinely spend 25 percent or more of their time leading a team of other GS employees in accomplishing two-grade interval work and meeting the minimum criteria below. It should be used in conjunction with the **SUPERVISORY POSITION ADDENDUM** (File name SUPPOS.ADD) to determine if the position is a Supervisor or Team Leader. Because PD Library descriptions focus on personal work, both checklists cover aspects of work accomplished through supervising or leading others.

The addendum requires identification of a minimum level of activity needed for Team Leader designation. Submitting officials should ensure that the minimum criteria are met and checked. The need for, number and type of Team Leader and supervisor positions should be based on sound position management considerations including span of control, type of work overseen, FTE and budget impact, customer service needs, and ultimately the impact on meeting strategic planning objectives.

TEAM LEADER POSITION ADDENDUM

This addendum should be completed and attached to the position description for employees who regularly and routinely spend **25 percent or more** of their time leading a team of other GS employees in accomplishing two-grade interval work. Team Leaders usually also participate in the team's technical work at the highest level accomplished.

Organizational Location: _____

Number of team members: _____
Professional Other

Immediate Supervisor/Title: _____

Typically, a team leader assists the team through knowledge and application of leadership and team building skills such as group facilitation, consensus building, coordination, coaching, problem solving, interpersonal communication, integration of work processes and products, obtaining resources and liaison with the supervisor. They and the team are accountable for outcomes and results.

AT A MINIMUM, TEAM LEADERS PERFORM ALL OF THE FIRST SEVEN AND A TOTAL OF FOURTEEN OF THE FOLLOWING TWENTY ACTIVITIES (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- ____ 1. Ensure that the organization's strategic plan, mission, vision, and values are communicated to the team and integrated into the team's strategies, goals, objectives, work plans and work products and services.

- ____ 2. Articulate and communicate to the team the assignment, project, problem to be solved, actionable events, milestones, and/or program issues under review, and deadlines and time frames for completion.

- ___3. Coach the team in the selection and application of appropriate problem solving methods and techniques, provide advice on work methods, practices and procedures, and assist the team and/or individual members in identifying the parameters of a viable solution;
- ___4. Lead the team in: identifying, distributing and balancing workload and tasks among employees in accordance with established work flow, skill level and/or occupational specialization; making adjustments to accomplish the workload in accordance with established priorities to ensure timely accomplishment of assigned team tasks; and ensuring that each employee has an integral role in developing the final team product;
- ___5. Train or arrange for the training of team members in methods and techniques of team building and working in teams to accomplish tasks or projects, and provide or arrange for specific administrative or technical training necessary for accomplishment of individual and team tasks;
- ___6. Monitor and report on the status and progress of work, checking on work in progress and reviewing completed work to see that the supervisor=s instructions on work priorities, methods, deadlines and quality have been met;
- ___7. Serve as coach, facilitator and/or negotiator in coordinating team initiatives and in consensus building activities among team members;
- ___8. Maintain program and administrative reference materials, project files and relevant background documents and make available policies, procedures and written instructions from the supervisor; maintain current knowledge to answer questions from team members on procedures, policies, directives, etc.;
- ___9. Prepare reports and maintain records of work accomplishments and administrative information, as required, and coordinate the preparation, presentation and communication of work-related information to the supervisor;
- ___10. Represent the team in dealings with the supervisor or manager for the purpose of obtaining resources (e.g., computer hardware and software, use of overtime or compensatory time), and securing needed information or decisions from the supervisor on major work problems and issues that arise;
- ___11. Report to the supervisor periodically on team and individual work accomplishments, problems, progress in mastering tasks and work processes, and individual and team training needs;
- ___12. Represent the team consensus and convey the team=s findings and recommendations in meetings and dealings with other team leaders, program officials, the public and other customers on issues related to or that have an impact on the team=s objectives, work products and/or tasks;
- ___13. Estimate and report to the team on progress in meeting established milestones and deadlines for completion of assignments, projects and tasks, and ensure that all team

members are aware of and participate in planning for achievement of team goals and objectives;

- ___14. Research, learn and apply a wide range of qualitative and/or quantitative methods to identify, assess, analyze and improve team effectiveness, efficiency and work products;
- ___15. Lead the team in assessing its strengths and weaknesses and provide leadership to the team in exploring alternatives and determining what improvements can be made (e.g., in work methods, processes and procedures);
- ___16. Approve emergency leave for up to three days; eight hours or less for medical appointments; and/or other types of leave as delegated by management;
- ___17. Resolve simple, informal complaints of employees and refer others, such as formal grievances and appeals, to the supervisor or an appropriate management official;
- ___18. Communicate team consensus and recommendations to the supervisor on actions affecting team and individual awards, rewards and recognition;
- ___19. Inform employees of available employee benefits, services and work related activities;
- ___20. Intercede with the supervisor on behalf of the team to inform the supervisor of performance management issues/problems and to recommend/request related actions, such as: assignments, reassignments, promotions, tour of duty changes, peer reviews and performance appraisals.

<p>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION</p> <p>PERSONNEL MANUAL INSTRUCTION</p>	<p>PMI <u>511-1*</u> DATE <u>11-18-96</u></p> <p>APPROVED:</p> <p><u>VERONICA D. TRIETSCH</u> DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES GROUP</p>
---	---

*Supersedes PMI 511-1, dated May 25, 1981;

Classification and Position

Management

Branch SOP# 24 and 26

SUBJECT: Employee Position Classification Appeals

I. AUTHORITY

Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 511. This Instruction sets forth Department of Education (ED) policies and procedures under which applicable employees may seek adjustment of the pay system, and/or position title, series, or grade (collectively referred to hereafter as "classification") to which they are officially assigned.

II. APPLICABILITY

This Instruction applies to all General Schedule (GS) and all Federal Wage System (WG and WS) positions in ED.

III. POLICY

It is ED policy that all positions be properly classified. Employees are entitled to appeal decisions regarding their classification to either the Department or the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

IV. NONAPPEALABLE ISSUES

An employee may not appeal the classification of another employee's position; the classification of his or her position in comparison with another employee's position; the propriety of OPM classification standards; federal pay schedules or rates; or the content or accuracy of the position description (PD) to which assigned. Only an employee may initiate a classification appeal on his or her position.

Assignment of duties and responsibilities as documented in official PD's is a management responsibility. Disagreements concerning assigned duties and responsibilities must be resolved through applicable Problem Resolution Procedures (PRP) for bargaining unit employees or Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) procedures for non-bargaining unit employees. The classification appeals process may not be used for this purpose.

V. PROCEDURES

- A. Employees must make a bona fide attempt to resolve questions concerning the classification of their positions with the first level supervisor and the servicing Human Resources (HR) office. The servicing HR office will provide technical advice and assistance to supervisors and employees to promptly resolve classification questions. HR will also make classification standards and guides available upon request.

If it is impossible to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution concerning the content of the PD, the employee may seek assistance through the PRP or ADR.

- B. Once an accurate description of duties and responsibilities is agreed to, if there is still lack of agreement on the classification of the position the employee or the employee's designated representative acting on behalf of the employee may initiate a classification appeal. The employee should seek guidance concerning designation of a representative from the servicing HR office. Consistent with 5 CFR 511.609, an employee's representative does not have a right to be present in on-site audits.

Ultimately, the supervisor has the final authority to determine the duties and responsibilities to be reflected in the PD, and to explain the basis for the classification of the position to the employee. Any classification appeal will be decided on the basis of the actual duties and responsibilities assigned by management and performed by the employee as described in the PD of record. Upon appeal, ED and/or OPM may investigate or audit the position as part of the fact finding process.

- C. Normally the first level of appeal is to the agency, but the employee may go directly to OPM. The latter is not encouraged since OPM will routinely return to the agency for facts and analysis of the issues involved. OPM will issue a non-appealable decision, whereas an employee may appeal a decision by the agency to OPM. An employee may not appeal to both entities at the same time.
- D. If an employee is downgraded through a classification action, he or she must file an appeal within 15 calendar days of the action in order for the decision to be made retroactive.
- E. An appeal by a Federal Wage System employee must first be filed within ED and a decision issued before the employee can appeal to OPM.

An agency appeal should be addressed to the Director, Human Resources Group, FB10B Room 1168, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202. The servicing HR office will provide the appropriate address for an appeal to OPM.

V. INFORMATION REQUIRED ON APPEAL

An employee must file an appeal in writing and include the following:

- (1) Name and home mailing address, and business phone number.
- (2) Official mailing address.
- (3) Organizational location of position in question.
- (4) Copy of official description and current classification of duties and responsibilities performed.
- (5) The requested classification.
- (6) A statement that the appellant considers the official position description to be complete and accurate, or a specific and detailed statement explaining why the appellant does not consider it to be complete and accurate including any relevant facts or reasons why the appellant believes it to be erroneously classified.
- (7) Name, address, and business phone of employee's representative, if any.

VI. NOTIFICATION

The ED HR office or OPM will notify the employee, or a representative if one is designated, in writing of its decision on the appeal, including any recommended or required action.

VII. CANCELLATION OF APPEAL

ED, or OPM shall cancel an employee's appeal upon written receipt of employee's written request to cancel; or when the employee or representative does not furnish requested information, or proceed with the advancement of the appeal.

An appeal will also be cancelled when an employee is assigned a new position unless there is the possibility the employee may be entitled to a retroactive benefit.